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### IKKINCHI QARABOG' URUSHI VA OZARBAYJONNING HARBIY-DIPLOMATIK STRATEGIYASI: MUZOKARALAR VA TINCHLIK JARAYONINING TAHLILI

Аннотация

Ushbu maqolada Ikkinchi Qarabog' urushi (2020) davrida Ozarbayjonning harbiy-diplomatik strategiyasining mojarolar dinamikasi hamda muzokaralar jarayoniga ta'siri tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot sifat metodlari - qiyosiy tahlil, sintez va voqealar tahlili asosida amalga oshirilgan. Maqolada Birinchi Qarabog' urushi va 2016-yildagi Aprel janglari kontekstida Ikkinchi Qarabog' urushining harbiy va diplomatik jihatlari qiyosiy tarzda yoritilgan. Muzokaralar jarayoni, uchinchi tomon vositachiligi hamda Ozarbayjon armiyasining strategik ustunligining tinchlik jarayoniga ta'siriga alohida e'tibor qaratilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, harbiy ustunlik nafaqat mojarolarning borishini, balki diplomatik natijalarni ham belgilab bergan. Maqola zamonaviy harbiy diplomatiya va mojarolarni hal etish sohasiga nazariy hamda amaliy hissa qo'shadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Qarabog' urushlari, harbiy diplomatiya, muzokaralar, vositachilik, tinchlik, Ozarbayjon–Armaniston munosabatlari

### ВТОРАЯ КАРАБАХСКАЯ ВОЙНА И ВОЕННО-ДИПЛОМАТИЧЕСКАЯ СТРАТЕГИЯ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА: АНАЛИЗ ПЕРЕГОВОРНОГО ПРОЦЕССА И МИРНОГО УРЕГУЛИРОВАНИЯ

Аннотация

В данной статье анализируется влияние военно-дипломатической стратегии Азербайджана в период Второй Карабахской войны (2020 г.) на динамику конфликта и переговорный процесс. Исследование проведено на основе качественных методов, включая сравнительный анализ, синтез и анализ событий. В статье в контексте Первой Карабахской войны и Апрельских боёв 2016 года в сравнительном аспекте рассматриваются военные и дипломатические аспекты Второй Карабахской войны. Особое внимание уделяется ходу переговоров, посредничеству третьих сторон, а также влиянию стратегического превосходства азербайджанской армии на процесс достижения мира. Результаты исследования показывают, что военное превосходство определило не только ход конфликта, но и его дипломатические итоги. Статья вносит теоретический и практический вклад в изучение современной военной дипломатии и урегулирования конфликтов.

**Ключевые слова:** Карабахские войны, военная дипломатия, переговоры, посредничество, мир, азербайджано-армянские отношения.

### THE SECOND KARABAKH WAR AND AZERBAIJAN'S MILITARY-DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY: AN ANALYSIS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND THE PEACE PROCESS

Annotation

This article examines Azerbaijan's military-diplomatic strategy during the Second Karabakh War (2020) and its impact on the dynamics of the conflict as well as the negotiation process. The study is based on qualitative research methods, including comparative analysis, synthesis, and event analysis. The article situates the Second Karabakh War within the context of the First Karabakh War and the April 2016 clashes, providing a comparative perspective on the military and diplomatic dimensions of the conflict. Particular attention is given to the progression of negotiations, third-party mediation, and the effect of the Azerbaijani armed forces' strategic advantage on the peace process. The findings indicate that military superiority not only determined the course of the conflict but also shaped its diplomatic outcomes. The primary sources used to investigate the problem include official government documents, scholarly articles by experts, and other scientific studies.

**Keywords:** Karabakh wars, military diplomacy, negotiations, mediation, peace, Azerbaijan-Armenia relations.

**Introduction.** The Second Karabakh War, which erupted in the autumn of 2020, represents a significant military-political event that reshaped the geopolitical balance in the South Caucasus region. The conflict was not merely the outcome of military operations but also the product of complex interactions among diplomatic negotiations and the positions of regional and international actors. Accordingly, analyzing the war necessitates an understanding of the interplay between military capabilities, diplomacy, and third-party mediation in shaping the outcomes. The primary objective of this study is to assess the influence of military power and diplomatic negotiations on the conflict's resolution, as well as to examine the role of third-party mediation in the peace process. The findings contribute not only to a deeper understanding of

Azerbaijan-Armenia relations but also to the broader study of military-diplomatic strategies and mediation mechanisms in contemporary conflicts. This research employs a combination of historical analysis, comparative methods, and military-diplomatic approaches. The principal sources used for this study include official government documents, scholarly articles by experts, and other academic research materials, providing a rigorous foundation for examining the problem.

Dynamics of the Conflict. The First Karabakh War (1988-1994) dealt a severe blow to Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and the rights of its population, generating a profound humanitarian and socio-economic crisis in the region. As a result of the conflict, the mountainous areas of Karabakh and seven adjacent districts fell under the control of Armenian

armed forces, displacing hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis. Although the ceasefire signed in May 1994 brought active hostilities to a halt, the root causes of the conflict remained unresolved, resulting in a “frozen conflict” situation. During this period, Armenia consolidated its positions in the occupied territories, while Azerbaijan continued diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring its territorial integrity and upholding the principles of international law. “Azerbaijan’s policy during this time pursued two primary directions: military preparedness and modernization, and diplomatic engagement to secure the international condemnation of the occupation within the framework of international law. This strategy subsequently provided both military and diplomatic advantages for the Second Karabakh War, which commenced in September 2020” [3]. Between 1994 and 2020, the South Caucasus region was characterized by a complex geopolitical environment. Russia, as the principal actor in the region, sought to balance its relations with both Azerbaijan and Armenia and, at the outset of the Second Karabakh War, refrained from direct military intervention, instead exerting political influence primarily through a mediating role [3]. The United States and France continued their mediation efforts within the framework of the Minsk Group; however, they were unable to achieve a resolution of the conflict over an extended period. The Minsk Group’s activities were largely aimed at preserving the status quo, and it failed to induce the parties toward a substantive compromise. Turkey’s military and diplomatic cooperation with Azerbaijan also contributed to a shift in the regional balance of power in favor of Azerbaijan. At the same time, the neutrality of Iran and other regional actors strengthened Azerbaijan’s strategic position. This geopolitical context allowed Azerbaijan to optimize both its military and diplomatic preparations on the eve of the Second Karabakh War [4]. Between 1994 and 2020, the Azerbaijani armed forces undertook modernization programs, equipping themselves with UAVs, missile systems, and modern weaponry. These preparations provided tactical advantages during the April 2016 clashes and the confrontations of 2020 [3]. In the diplomatic sphere, Azerbaijan focused international attention on its territorial integrity and secured the support of UN resolutions to counteract Armenia’s occupation policies. Armenia, by contrast, pursued a strategy primarily aimed at preserving the status quo, attempting to consolidate its military positions while avoiding diplomatic compromise. This approach limited Armenia’s strategic options during the Second Karabakh War. Azerbaijan’s combination of military readiness and diplomatic activity complemented each other, granting the country a decisive initial advantage in the conflict. Consequently, the Second Karabakh War marked a sharp escalation of the long-standing “neither war nor peace” situation in the region.

The prolonged ineffectiveness of the negotiation process, particularly in light of the April 2016 clashes and the July 2020 Tovuz incidents, demonstrated that the conflict was not truly frozen but rather awaiting favorable conditions to transition into an active phase. In this context, the outbreak of hostilities in September 2020 can be understood as the result of an intersection between structural and situational factors. From the very first days of the war, the operations conducted by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces were characterized not by conventional positional warfare, but by a high degree of maneuverability and technological superiority. During the initial phase of the conflict, operational initiative was fully seized by the Azerbaijani side.

From an analytical perspective, a key feature of the conflict was the systematic and coordinated use of modern technologies, particularly unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). These technologies not only provided a tactical advantage but

also fundamentally transformed the structure of warfare. The targeted destruction of Armenia’s heavy equipment and air defense systems progressively weakened its overall defensive capacity.

The effective termination of a conflict requires several key conditions: strong political control to ensure coherent decision-making and strategic direction; clearly defined and limited political objectives that provide a feasible framework for resolution; force postures designed to constrain adversary activities, thereby preventing escalation and the prolongation of hostilities; war-fighting concepts and strategies that incentivize early termination and minimize prolonged engagement; and technological superiority, which enhances operational effectiveness and deterrence capabilities. The success or failure of any negotiation can be assessed based on the extent to which these conditions are fulfilled [3]. In this regard, the conflict can be characterized as a “new generation model of warfare,” in which technology, information dominance, and operational agility have largely replaced the traditional reliance on mass force.

Understanding the course of the war requires a careful analysis of the strategic objectives of the parties involved. These objectives shaped not only the direction of military operations but also diplomatic and information policies. Azerbaijan’s primary strategic goal was to restore its territorial integrity in accordance with international law. This objective was grounded not only in military considerations but also in political and legal frameworks. The prolonged ineffectiveness of negotiations over many years transformed the military option for Azerbaijan from an alternative into a necessity. In this sense, the war can be viewed as a continuation of Azerbaijan’s broader state strategy. The speeches of President Ilham Aliyev clearly articulated the ideological and political foundations of this strategic line: “This war is a Patriotic War for our people. We are liberating our homeland from occupation. During this period, the glorious Azerbaijani Army has liberated many settlements from the enemy. We are restoring historical justice on the battlefield, because Nagorno-Karabakh is an ancient and historical land of Azerbaijan” [1]. This approach strengthened both Azerbaijan’s domestic legitimacy and its position in the international arena. At the same time, Azerbaijan did not limit its efforts to achieving a military victory alone but sought to translate it into diplomatic advantage. Active engagement with the international community, a well-structured information policy, and the effective use of legal arguments formed integral components of this strategy during the war. In contrast, Armenia’s strategic objective was largely focused on preserving the existing status quo and maintaining control over the occupied territories. However, this approach proved ineffective under the conditions of a dynamic and rapidly evolving conflict. It can be argued that Armenia’s principal strategic weakness lay in its inability to adapt to the changing nature of warfare, as well as in the inefficient use of its resources, which contributed to the rapid shift in the balance of power during the conflict.

Main Phases of Military Operations and Tactical Outcomes. The course of the Second Karabakh War evolved in distinct phases, each characterized by specific military-strategic features. First phase: The initial stage of the war was marked by the seizure of operational initiative. The Azerbaijani armed forces achieved rapid advances in the southern direction of the front, creating breaches in Armenia’s defensive lines. The primary tactical advantage at this stage stemmed from the effective use of technological capabilities; Second phase: During this stage, operations were conducted in greater depth, accelerating the disintegration of Armenia’s defensive system. The liberation of Hadrut and surrounding areas held not only

tactical but also operational-strategic significance. It weakened the coordination capacity of the Armenian forces and disrupted the integrity of their defensive lines. At the same time, diplomatic initiatives intensified during this phase; although several humanitarian ceasefire agreements were reached, they failed to produce lasting effects. This demonstrated that military dynamics were prevailing over diplomatic processes; Third phase: The final stage of the war was decisive in nature. The liberation of the city of Shusha represented a turning point, both geographically and symbolically. The restoration of control over Shusha led to the complete collapse of Armenia's defensive system and a definitive shift in the strategic balance. Following this development, Armenia's capacity for resistance was significantly diminished, ultimately resulting in the signing of the trilateral statement on 10 November 2020.

Thus, the course of the Second Karabakh War demonstrated that technological and informational superiority play a decisive role in modern warfare; traditional defense strategies lose their effectiveness in the face of new models of conflict; military success has a direct impact on diplomatic and political outcomes; and war is not merely a military confrontation, but also a struggle for strategic communication and legitimacy.

War Outcomes, the Negotiation Process, and the Post-Conflict Phase. The Second Karabakh War concluded with the signing of a trilateral statement between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia on 10 November 2020. This document effectively brought an end to the military phase of the conflict and laid the foundation for the emergence of new geopolitical realities in the region. According to the terms of the statement, Azerbaijan regained a significant portion of its previously occupied territories through military means, while the remaining districts were returned in a phased manner. This outcome demonstrates that Azerbaijan achieved its strategic objectives and fundamentally altered the military-political balance of the conflict. It is essential to assess the outcomes of the war not only from a military perspective but also in political and legal terms. From an analytical standpoint, the 10 November statement not only altered the balance of power in the region but also contributed to the formation of a new security architecture. The document further reinforced Russia's role in the region and introduced a new reality through the deployment of peacekeeping forces. In the post-war period, a new diplomatic dynamic has emerged in the region. Unlike previous years, negotiations are no longer focused on preserving the status quo but rather on formalizing the new realities within a legal and political framework. Azerbaijan has advanced a post-war peace agenda and initiated efforts toward the normalization of relations with Armenia. Within this framework, key priorities have included the mutual recognition of territorial integrity, the delimitation and demarcation of borders, and the reopening of communications. President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly emphasized in his statements that Azerbaijan is committed to ensuring lasting peace in the region: "If a peace agreement is signed and those fundamental principles are implemented, then peace in the Caucasus will be long-term and sustainable... We have been actively promoting a new era in the Caucasus an era of peace and cooperation" [2]. At the same time, the negotiation process has involved various international actors, particularly Russia, the European Union, and other regional powers. This underscores that the conflict extends beyond a purely regional issue and holds broader significance within the global political context. The post-war period is characterized not only by opportunities for peace but also by significant challenges. These challenges encompass security, political, and socio-economic dimensions. One of the primary concerns is the widespread presence of landmines in the

liberated territories, which both delays the return of civilians and increases security risks in the region. In addition, the reconstruction of infrastructure and the return of internally displaced persons remain critical issues. At the political level, the main challenge is the conclusion of a sustainable peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Although this process has gone through several stages, it has not yet reached a final resolution. A key factor complicating this process is the low level of trust between the parties. At the same time, the opening of new communication routes in the region, particularly the proposed Zangezur corridor, carries significant importance in terms of both economic opportunities and geopolitical risks. One of the central priorities in the post-conflict period is to ensure sustainable peace and to establish effective mechanisms for regional cooperation. Azerbaijan's initiatives have been aimed at creating new platforms for cooperation across the region. In this context, transport and communication projects, economic integration, and the strengthening of interdependence are regarded as essential tools for consolidating peace. Crucially, sustainable peace cannot be achieved through political agreements alone; parallel progress in economic, social, and humanitarian spheres is equally necessary. At the same time, the role of international actors remains significant. Their mediation efforts and initiatives aimed at maintaining regional stability continue to influence the sustainability of the peace process.

The outcomes of the Second Karabakh War demonstrate that a new geopolitical reality has emerged in the region. Azerbaijan has successfully transformed its military victory into political and diplomatic leverage. The post-conflict period is characterized by both opportunities and significant challenges, and sustainable peace can be achieved not solely through military outcomes but through comprehensive regional cooperation mechanisms. "Effective regional collaboration should not be limited to governmental actors; it must also encompass public diplomacy, civil society, academia, and the media. Reducing stereotypes, strengthening cultural and scientific ties, and developing joint security concepts are essential for long-term peace" [9]. "In the South Caucasus, security depends not only on military and political factors but also on economic interdependence, mutual trust, dialogue, and humanitarian cooperation" [7].

Thus, the Second Karabakh War represented a turning point in the military-political resolution of the long-standing conflict in the South Caucasus region. The findings of this study indicate that the status quo established after 1994 neither complied with the requirements of international law nor ensured sustainable stability in the region. From this perspective, the war that occurred in 2020 can be understood as the logical consequence of the existing unstable situation. The "Peace and Cooperation Platform in the Caucasus," initiated by Turkey in 2009, constituted one of the initial efforts in this direction; however, significant opportunities for regional cooperation only emerged following the Second Karabakh War in 2020. "The recent "3+3" format (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia + Russia, Turkey, Iran) proposes new dialogue prospects; however, Georgia's refusal to participate due to tensions with Russia" and "Armenia's unconstructive stance limit its practical impact. Despite this, the format remains a potential alternative for trust-building, requiring more balanced international support, as the OSCE Minsk Group has proved ineffective" [6; 7].

The study revealed that Azerbaijan's success in military operations was not coincidental but conditioned by long-term military preparation, strategic planning, and the effective application of modern technologies. In particular, the extensive use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and agile operational

tactics had a decisive impact on the course of the war. These factors further confirm that modern warfare models are evolving and that technological superiority plays a central role. At the same time, the conflict should be understood not merely as a military confrontation but also as a political and diplomatic struggle [3; 4]. Azerbaijan successfully translated its military achievements into the diplomatic sphere, thereby strengthening its position on the international stage. In this context, the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020 serves as a key political document demonstrating the attainment of Azerbaijan's strategic objectives.

Following the war, a new geopolitical reality has emerged in the region. On one hand, this reality is characterized for Azerbaijan by the restoration of territorial integrity and the strengthening of its political position; on the other hand, it necessitates the establishment of new security and cooperation

mechanisms in the region. In the post-conflict period, one of the primary priorities is the consolidation of lasting peace. Achieving this requires more than mere political agreements; comprehensive measures such as economic integration, the opening of communication corridors, and the development of mutual trust must be implemented. In this regard, the creation of regional cooperation platforms and the constructive involvement of international actors assume particular significance.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the Second Karabakh War represents not only the resolution of a regional conflict but also a significant event reflecting the transformation of the balance of power, warfare models, and diplomatic strategies within the contemporary international system. The analysis of this war provides important scientific and practical insights for the study and management of similar conflicts in the future.

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